CHILDREN'S DEP'T

THE HORN BOOK

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THE HORN BOOK

Volume II MARCH, 1926 *Number 2*

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Caroline Dale Snedeker

THE HORN BOOK

Volume II MARCH, 1926 *Number 2*

THREE STORIES OF ANCIENT GREECE

By Alice M. Jordan

Supervisor of Work with Children, Boston Public Library

LATE in the afternoon, as she threaded her way along a crowded city street where the evening editions were being cried and the homeward flowing stream of workers hurried past, the story-teller was stopped in her progress by an eager-faced newsboy.

"Oh, tell me," he said, "I can't wait till next week. Did Leonidas and all his brave Greeks really perish?"

More real than the latest news in the papers he was carrying, more gripping than the trumped-up pictures on the screen, the imperishable story of Thermopylæ had reached this boy through the Library story hour where, week by week, "The Spartan" was being told.

How appealing Mrs. Snedeker has made the friendship between Aristodemus, the youth, and the great king Leonidas! And how deep is our emotion over that poignant moment when "a little shepherd boy came running up the way, sobbing forth his bitter lament."

"'Leonidas is dead! Le-on-i-das-ai-ai-ai! is dead!'"

The background of sound scholarship never becomes obtrusive by the introduction of dry information, never robs the moving narrative of its vitality and human interest.

Aristodemus, called "the Coward," because he alone came back to Sparta when the brave Three Hundred fell before the Persian host, is a wonderfully lovable character. Forever vindicated by Mrs. Snedeker's story, his figure glows with the light of a patriotism sure to inspire with high ideals and noble aspirations, many young people to whom, otherwise, Leonidas, Thermopylæ, Platæa, Greece herself, had been but names in a far-away past.

"Theras and His Town" is for children somewhat younger. Here, Mrs. Snedeker draws a contrast between Athens, with her

love of beauty and high civilization, and Sparta, rigid, harsh, inflexible in discipline, training splendid athletes and soldiers, but actually a savage state.

A boy brought up in the beautiful city of Athens learned music; he must play the lyre and sing poems; he learned to run races and play games; he learned to pray and to sacrifice, to love what was lovely.

The little boy, Theras, trained in this way was transplanted to Sparta, far from home and friends. In many ways the difference in education, the difference in point of view, is shown.

Finally, Theras runs away and after braving danger and peril, meets his father's friend, Herodotus, and is restored to his home.

Adventures, likely enough for the time and place, besprinkle the pages sufficiently to make a good story, read for sheer absorption in plot and action, while the setting has all the charm of truthful description, illumined by sympathetic understanding of the different currents influencing the life of the ancient Greeks.

In "The Perilous Seat" the author has written a book especially acceptable to older girls. The story opens on the first day of the Pythian festival at Delphi, when Dryas wins the prize with the song that rightfully belonged to his sister, Theria.

From then onward, Theria fills the centre of the stage, first with her determination to become the Pythia, then as the actual priestess of Apollo, chosen to give a famous oracle of hope to all Hellas. "They sent messengers at once, carrying the precious words of courage northward to the ships of Artemisium and to the little band of heroes at Thermopylæ, and eastward to Athens city, crying:

"'Apollo, the son of Leto, is on our side. He bids us pray to the winds.'"

An unusual love story adds to the romantic atmosphere surrounding this girl whose high calling made her no less responsive to the perfect devotion of an Argive warrior.

Athens, Sparta, and Delphi, three great angles from which to view the culture of ancient Greece. We owe Mrs. Snedeker warm gratitude for giving us these living figures in a history known so generally through mere text-book acquaintance.

HOW "THE SPARTAN" AND "THERAS" GREW

A Letter to "The Horn Book" from Caroline Dale Snedeker

DOWN in the so-called *Pocket* of Indiana, on the banks of the placid Wabash, lies the little village of New Harmony. Here I take great credit to myself, I was born.

Over the arched doorway of my birthroom was carved a trilobite, above my roof the pretty tower finished with a crinoid, and above that swung a prehistoric fish as weathervane. For this dwelling had been the headquarters of the Department of Geology of the United States, my grandfather being the first U. S. Geologist.

Upon this "new laboratory" he had expended all his artistry and fancy and my father, making it into a dwelling, did the same. Thus, one entered the house into a low-raftered hall, but turning into the parlor came suddenly into a lofty room with long, French windows opening to the floor, and above them a row of dainty, small-arched windows, and in the ceiling an intricately paned skylight. The whole house is full of such surprises.

The New Laboratory

My father and mother removed from here when I was six months old. My little mother wept sorely at leaving her pretty home, and had I been at years of discretion I surely would have joined her.

But whatever praise I may give to "our Harmony," as we called it, must in no way reflect upon my second home, Mount Vernon. Here I spent an almost flawless childhood. There were five children of us. My mother gathered about us all the musicians of the town. They played, in piano-quartette form, the early overtures of Weber, Gluck, etc., the symphonies of Hayden, Mozart, and Beethoven.

When I was still young enough to "play on the floor" I have listened to these—not the distant perfect renditions of the radio—but the repeated efforts and strivings for perfection till I knew them by heart.

There is not a symphony of Beethoven that does not swing me back into that childish happiness—not a sweet song of Schubert that does not bring back the drowsy child upstairs going to sleep while her mother downstairs sang after the cares of the child-filled day. It has always made me feel that a mother educates more by her own spontaneous enthusiasms than in any direct teaching.

We children went to school in a tiny brick building which stood in our own yard. It was covered with wild roses to the very roof. At one period this school for some reason was held in the Methodist Church. Here the pews were like high boxes into which a child could retire and be entirely hidden from the teacher. The advantages of such an arrangement need hardly be explained. For myself I used the seclusion by lying down on my stomach in the long pew and writing on my slate my first poem.

It began Chaucer-wise:

"In the Spring the birds do sing."

I have not the slightest idea why I did it, and I was quite astonished at my mother's pleasure when I showed her my slate.

I was nine years old. After that I always wrote poetry.

Perhaps the strongest influence of my childhood (that is except my father and mother) was my New Harmony.

I felt it to be *mine,* for had not my great-grandfather, Robert Owen, owned the entire town. Young as I was I think I really sensed the idealism of Robert Owen's social experiment there. I was intensely proud that the town had been founded not for gain but for the "good of humanity." To go there driving slowly over the fifteen miles with my father in the little buggy was always a pilgrimage. I would thrill with an

Robert Owen

unearthly anticipation at each nearer turn of the road. At Harmony were books, pictures, a public library, my wonderful old Uncle Richard Owen, who studied earthquakes and had a room filled with strange apparatus and geological specimens.

The history of the town fascinated me. It had been built by the religious sect of *Rappites,* Germans who had built the houses of brick in the quaint old world fashion.

This was the town which Robert Owen bought.

Then the Rappites, at the command of their autocratic leader, left the town all in a single day. There must have been some heart-breaks then, for one man stole back to write:

On this day we go away,
May God protect us in our wandering.

He wrote this with chalk on the underside of an attic stair where no one saw it for many years. I have always imagined that it was my father who discovered it. He was much touched by it, I know, and copied it carefully.

The new Communists came in with the most flaming hope that can possibly be imagined. The old yellowed letters of this time thrill and quiver with it. The whole world was going to be made happy.

The Early Buildings of the Community as Sketched by a Contemporary

"We intend to abolish the causes of greed and selfishness," said Owen. "The vices themselves must go in time."

But it was not only the Communistic experiment which made Harmony interesting. The experiments in education were equally sweeping and, as it proved, far more effective.

To further this Owen invited noted men from France, Germany, Holland, and Scotland, scientists, artists, and educators to come to Harmony. They met at Pittsburgh, where Owen bought a keel boat in which they floated down the Ohio. Thus, they entered the town all in a single morning. The little wilderness place must have been electrified by them. The people always called the keel boat, the *Boatload of Knowledge*. It is Harmony's "Mayflower," and to say "My grandfather came in the 'Boatload of Knowledge,'" is great honor.

I think as a child I had almost a regret that I had not been born seventy years earlier so that I might have seen "the giants in those days," who walked the streets and filled the place with such a sweet, benignant atmosphere that all through my childhood I felt it. Indeed, I think visitors to Harmony must even yet be aware of that ghostly sweetness.

When I was fourteen years old our whole family moved to Cincinnati for the sole purpose of education. Children who have all sorts of "advantages" thrust upon them these days could hardly credit the anticipation and awe with which we entered a real city school. We were one and all hungry to learn and determined to excel.

But we had gone mainly for music. The whole family entered the College of Music at once, my mother as well as the children. She went through the courses of vocal music, harmony, and composition, and graduated before any of us. I studied piano and composition. One sister studied violin, another voice and viola, a brother and sister the cello. As we grew older the Musical Parkes became well known and the weekly and even daily impromptu concerts at our home are yet remembered. Any one was invited who wanted to come. Often thirty persons would happen in unexpectedly.

It was while studying my lessons at a private school in Avondale that my attention was arrested by a quotation from Herodotus in P. V. N. Myers' delightful "Ancient History." It was only two paragraphs giving the history of Aristodemos, the Coward of Thermopylæ. But I never forgot it. In my walks and idle moments I wove stories about this Aristodemos until he became as real as persons I actually met.

I cannot remember a time when anything referring to Greece did not at once hold my notice. My father's old-fashioned tiny photographs, gathered on a youthful visit to Italy, a stray article in the *St. Nicholas,* some remarkable pictures in New Harmony, which I firmly believed were painted by Raphael and which even today are a mystery to scholars. Here were Psyche, Eros, Mars, a Centaur exquisitely painted, in Raphael's manner at least, and I used to gaze at them hour long. All these wove themselves about the Aristodemos story.

After my marriage my husband asked me if there were not

some book I had in mind to write. I told him there was; but as the story concerned a character in Greece 500 years B. C., and I was not a Greek scholar I could not write it.

(The torch in the original looks like actual flame and the butterfly wings are exquisitely coloured.)

"Then make yourself a Greek scholar," he said.

"But how can I do that?"

"First," he said, "you must read in translation everything the Greeks have left. Then everything written in English about

them. After that you can attack the French and German monographs."

This last I did not do. But all the former things, with my husband's wonderful help, I did do. It took me six years, for I had many interruptions. But at the end of that time I had written my first novel, "The Coward of Thermopylæ," or as it is now called, "The Spartan."

I finished it in Hempstead, Long Island, where my husband, the Rev. Charles H. Snedeker, was rector of the old Colonial St. George's Church.

Here, also, I finished "Seth Way," a novel of the New Harmony Community. My third novel, "The Perilous Seat," I wrote while at the MacDowell Colony in Peterboro, N. H.

Here, also, I began my child's book, "Theras and His Town," but I finished it sitting in a tiny high cupola in Nantucket, overlooking the wide blue sea in every direction.

My husband and I are now living on Long Island near the little village of St. James.

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER.

COUNTRY TALES OF JULIANA HORATIA EWING

By Elinor Whitney

IMAGINE a quiet English village surrounded with rutted grass-green lanes, rolling fields, and flowering hedgerows. Here on the hill overlooking the downs are the little house and walled garden of Daddy Darwin, and those are his pigeons tumbling through the golden sunlight. From this hill you can follow the silver thread of the canal by which Fred and Charlie betook themselves to London.

From "Jackanapes"

At the opposite end of the village is Dame Datchett's cottage, low, thatched, and creeper covered, where Jan went to school. In the village itself are the church, the vicarage, and Mrs. Overtheway's house, set behind the "green gate with a click." Opposite is the village green belonging to the Grey Goose, and down the hawthorn lane is Mary's Meadow where the nightingale sings.

This is a glimpse of the composite village of Juliana Horatia Ewing's stories—"Daddy Darwin's Dovecot," "A Great Emergency," "Jan of the Windmill," "Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances," "Jackanapes," "Mary's Meadow."

In this most delightful of quiet villages live families, and large ones, too, of boys and girls, red-cheeked, boisterous, good-natured, and best of all, real. Mrs. Ewing's boys get black eyes fighting; go walnut stealing at dawn; learn to skate and swim and dive; play cricket, ride ponies, and play their boyish pranks. Jem and Jack in "We and the World" fool the parlor-maid from London into believing a chaffinch's nest filled with rose hips is a robin red-breast's nest with eggs in it, and this is an extract of their doings, when they return from a first day at school and are asked by their mother what they think of their teacher.

"Well, love, and what do you think of Mrs. Wood?" she said.

"I think," chanted I (Jack), in that high brassy pitch of voice, which Jem and I had adopted for this bravado period of our existence —"I think she's like our old white hen that turned up its eyes and died of the pip. Lack-a-daisy-dee! Lack-a-daisy-dee!"

And I twisted my body about and strutted up and down the room with a supposed travesty of Mrs. Wood's movements.

"So she is," said faithful Jem. "Lack-a-daisy-dee! Lack-a-daisy-dee!" and he wriggled about after me and knocked over the Berlin wool-basket.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" sighed our poor mother.

Jem righted the basket, and I took a run and a flying leap over it, and having cleared it successfully, took another, and yet another, each one soothing my feelings to the extent, by which it shocked my mother's. At the third bound, Jem, not to be behind-hand, uttered a piercing yell from behind the sofa.

"Good gracious, what's the matter?" cried my mother.

"It's the war-whoop of the Ojibeway Indians," I promptly explained, and having emitted another, to which I flattered myself, Jem's had been as nothing for hideousness, we departed to raise a row in the kitchen.

As for the girls, they, too, are real and are not to be outdone by their brothers. They climb trees, quarrel and make up, invent games, make their own gardens, and show undaunted spirit in all their undertakings. Henrietta (A Great Emergency) is quite typical of them. She likes to be like a boy and is even discovered writing "Henry" in her books. Her hair is always coming out of curl and by means of a special toss of her head she can make it part on the side quite like Rupert's, and what is more she can ride the pony bare-back, whereas Rupert is thrown off.

Undoubtedly Mrs. Ewing has drawn a great many of her characters from real life and you cannot but feel that she is reconstructing her own childhood in many of the family happenings which occur. As her sister writes in a short sketch of her life, she was always the leader in their childhood adventures and it was to Julie that they always turned for inspiration and enlivenment. She was never at a loss for entertainment, and always ready to make sacrifices for the others. Madam Liberality in the story by the same name is, in her sister's opinion, a very good picture of Mrs. Ewing herself. Many of her book children have the same fondness for theatricals that she herself had, and in several of her stories there are recountings of Christmas and Twelfth Night performances. The enthusiasm for them is well expressed by Bobby in the following extract from "An Ill-tempered Family."

"Could I do the Dragon?" asked Bobby, releasing his hot face from the folds of an old blue cloak lined with red, in which he was rehearsing his walk as a belated wayfarer.

"Certainly not," said I, "you're the Bereaved Father and the Faithful Attendant to begin with, and I hope you won't muddle them. And you're Twelve Travellers as well, and the thunder, remember!"

"I don't care how many I do, if only I can," said Bobby, drawing his willing arm across his streaming forehead. "I should like to have a fiery tail."

Like Dickens, Mrs. Ewing finds all her material in the English middle class, and in the same way she makes her characters live, stressing this one in some eccentricity and that one in some trait of human kindliness and understanding. Thus we have the Old Squire, Nurse Bundle, Mr. Rowe the bargemaster, Isaac Irvine, the bee keeper, and countless others, including "Snuffy," the wicked old schoolmaster, who reminds us so much of Wackford Squeers in "Nicholas Nickleby."

Even her style often reminds one of Dickens,—this little bit which describes a whole-hearted Sunday afternoon service in the little church on the moors.

"Away went the organ which was played by the vicar's eldest daughter—away went the vicar's second daughter, who led the singing from the vicarage pew with a voice like a bird—away went the choir, which, in spite of surplices, could not be cured of waiting half a beat for her—and away went the congregation—young men and maidens, old men and children—in one broad tide of somewhat irregular harmony."

The breath of the English country-side is to be found in her stories, and the love of it, as expressed in the feelings of the ex-convict in "We and the World" who ". . . listened to the blackbirds and thrushes as their songs dropped by odd notes into silence, and gazed at the near fields and trees, and the little

From "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot"

homestead with its hayricks on the hill when the grass was apple-green in the gold mist of sunset: and went on gazing when that had faded into fog, and the hedge-row elms were black against the sky, as if the eye could not be filled with seeing, nor the ear with hearing!"

For real boys and girls, here are many other real boys and girls,—animals, adventure on sea and land, mystery, misers, fires, heroic deeds, and the great out-doors where Mrs. Ewing

is familiar with every bird and flower, and do not let us forget the dogs—Saxon, Rubens, and Perronet—for who has depicted the friendship between dogs and children more understandingly than Mrs. Ewing?

The pictures used in this article are taken from the first editions of those of Mrs. Ewing's books which were illustrated by Randolph Caldecott. A very attractive set of her works, illustrated in color, can now be had in the Queen's Treasury Series, each volume $2.00, as listed here.

A Flat Iron for a Farthing
Jan of the Windmill
Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances
Lob-lie-by-the-fire and Other Tales
The Brownies and Other Tales
We and the World
A Great Emergency and Other Tales
Melchior's Dream and Other Tales
Jackanapes, the Story of a Short Life, and Daddy Darwin's Dovecot
Six to Sixteen
Mary's Meadow and Other Tales

ABOUT THE BIANCOS

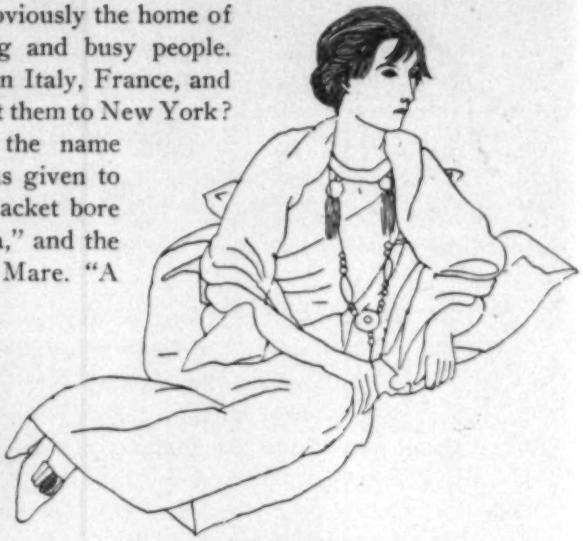
By Louise Seaman

THERE are four of them: Mrs. Margery Williams Bianco, Captain Francesco Bianco, Cecco and Pamela. Then besides there are the great black cat, "The Common People," on the hearth, and "Poor Cecco" himself on the mantel; a wooden doll or so; probably the velveteen rabbit and the celluloid admiral, in the cupboard. Tea is ready on a wonderful wooden settee made by the captain. You turn over the pages of some of the special editions and rare books which are the captain's everyday business.

Somehow an old barn comes into the talk and Margery remembers her childhood in the Pennsylvania country where such barns grow. Then Cecco shows the magazine, of which he was associate editor in Woodstock this summer. He has graduated from Columbia and is assisting in his father's business. His father brings out the first books made in the family. They were made to order, when they all lived in Turin and the children were very small. The captain would go away on business and offer a prize for the best book ready on his return. Some of these astonishing little books are still on the family shelves. They are small, lettered with care, and full of pictures. The young mother, who had already written several novels, doubtless handed on her story-telling powers. And the pictures of children, of rabbits, of the family, showed at once that there was an artist in the family.

The artist may take you into her own room, the studio, where she has her easel, a big carved chair, a work table, and corner cupboards for various treasures. This room, like others in the apartment, shows her own color planning, in bright borders on chairs and doors and delicate patterns painted on the cupboard glass.

This apartment is obviously the home of exciting and interesting and busy people. They have had homes in Italy, France, and England. What brought them to New York?



Margery Williams Bianco, drawn by her daughter, Pamela

Well, I first met the name Bianco on a book I was given to review. Its dull gray jacket bore the puzzling title "Flora," and the magic name of de la Mare. "A Book of Drawings by Pamela Bianco" from the exhibition of work done before she was twelve years old, held in the Leicester Galleries in London. Nothing dull gray within! Eight full color pictures with gold touches, several dozen line drawings. How to describe their directness, their magic; the rare quality of a childish mind reflecting only the loveliest visions and imaginings, putting down a reality of flower, tree, bird, face, feeling, in lines that flowed with the rhythm and ease of assured artist. There is humor and a touch of caricature. There is the kind of awkwardness one finds in Italian primitives, and the kind of rich detail one finds in Oriental work. These are the pictures which inspired Mr. de la Mare to write such poems as "Divine Delight," "Mirage," "See Now This Filigree." . . . Children would understand only a few of them, as "Suppose . . . and suppose that a wild little Horse of Magic came cantering out of the sky . . ." and "Master Rabbit." But children should hear them, nevertheless, and should look at the pictures. Who can tell what spring of answering magic they might touch with their simplicity and their strangeness?

When these pictures first came to New York to be exhibited, Pamela and her father came too. The showing at the Andersen Galleries was a great success. Later the mother and Cecco came over, and there came in the trunks children's stories which

Mrs. Bianco had been writing and having published abroad. One of them, "The Velveteen Rabbit," was being made into a book, with pictures by the distinguished English artist, William Nicholson.

Pamela, at that time, wore her hair in pigtails down her back, had a pet guinea pig, liked out of doors, bus riding, skating, all boys' games. She is now eighteen, and likes all the same things, plus dancing and reading. Her braids are wound around her head, but this does not make her look very much older. How much she has grown up, really shows in her work. Now

Pamela Bianco

she is making lithographs, some of them listed with the best prints of the year, and oil paintings of a strange beauty. People call her an "artist's artist," meaning it a great compliment to her technique. She gets a luminous glow into her paint, which can invest a rose in a glass, a lady by a tree, a city window, all with

From "Poor Cecco," illustrated by Arthur Rackham

an eerie atmosphere. Her methods, her subjects, are all worked out alone. She has never been to any art school and has seldom visited museums. Many artists are among her friends, but one seldom hears her talking art with them.

While Pamela is at her painting, through long mornings and afternoons of real work, a quiet, dark-haired person is busy,

perhaps even in the same room, writing or typing, or reading manuscripts, in French, English, or Italian. Her mother has a critical as well as a creative faculty. She has, too, that same power of investing the everyday thing with magic which is apparent in all Pamela's work. Such a story as that of "The Velveteen Rabbit" proved this at once. "What is REAL?" asked the rabbit one day. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you, and a stick out handle?" "Real isn't how you are made," said the skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you when a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

The Family New Year card, drawn, and printed in four colors by hand, by Captain Bianco

In "The Little Wooden Doll," where every phrase a short story tells, there is the unerring choice of just such flowers and creatures of wood and field as make this tale move in a timeless world. Children; an old discarded toy; an attic; the friendly mice; the helpful birds and grasshoppers—these will live forever in fairy tales. It makes a perfect little book for small children because most of the pictures were made by Pamela when she was twelve. Last year she added new decorations and line drawings to complete the book-making. I think neither author, artist, nor publisher knew what a lovely book it would make until it was finished. It is one of those fit-the-pocket books which can be handled affectionately by young and old.

"Poor Cecco," that celebrated, dilapidated, ancient member of the family, had another fate. He made such an irresistibly humorous short story that a magazine demanded a long story about him, Mr. Rackham made pictures for him, and he became an impressive gift book, quarto size. Here again, toys become human and heroic. They fill a larger stage than in the other books. There is a larger cast: one is reminded of that

PAMELA BIANCO
Pamela's Letterhead

old favorite, "Racketty-Packetty House," by Mrs. Burnett, though there is more humor and satire in this new book. Every page lives up to the first page, and that is rich with two familiar characters introduced anew. "The tall old clock in the hall, with a round foolish face—have you noticed how he always looks surprised, though he ought to know perfectly well what the hour is"? "Dong!" he says. "Another thirty minutes gone!

From "Flora"

Now, how did that happen?" Then there is Murrum the cat, the exact duplicate of the cat on the Bianco hearth at this minute. What a name for a wise, cruel cat, Murrum! He has locked all the toys tight into their cupboard. They get out and go on a treasure hunt, in the course of which Poor Cecco breaks off his wooden tail. Cecco's further adventures, his friendship with that gypsy doll, Jensina, their escape from the rats, the mystery of Tubby's disappearance, the final flight of Murrum—these are only a few details in a stirring plot which

will hold any youngster under eight enthralled, whether or not he has had a toy cupboard of his own. It is written with the same respect for children which inspired the Collodi of "Pinocchio" and the Andersen of "The Constant Tin Soldier" and the Horne of "Memoirs of a London Doll." Their wooden heroes were people, not like children, but like older people as children see and hear them moving about in a strange, great, colorful world. These stories, with all their make-believe, have the tang of reality. They are for the child who is being fed on literature, not on the childishness of the too simple, usual, ordinary sort of thing. In all of them there is crisp dialogue, ready wit, the unusual word, the poetic phrase.

From "Flora"

This story cannot conclude. It will be continued. The Biancos are all young and they will all keep on making books, as one of the things they like best to do among many things they do well. (All of them can "put themselves around a cornstick.") They have an instinct for what is distinguished. They are rich in the memory of old world places, and the knowledge of classics in more than one language. They have the spirit of play, the sentiment that treasures nonsensical possessions, the humor that keeps alive a family vernacular. We are lucky to have them living and working with us.

Head pieces and tail pieces from "The Wooden Doll"

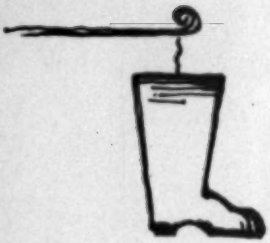
On the opposite page is shown the title page of a new book of poems (not for children) with decorations by Pamela Bianco. The decoration shown below is from the same book.

GLENWAY WESCOTT
NATIVES OF ROCK:
XX POEMS: 1921-1922
WITH DECORATIONS
BY PAMELA BIANCO

FRANCESCO BIANCO
NEW YORK
1925

THE COBBLER'S

By Rachel Field



Shoes on counter, bench and shelf;
Shoes heaped on the floor,
And a golden giant's boot that swings
Above the Cobbler's door.

Stubby toes and run-down heels,
Leather soles worn thin;
Shoes so cracked and shiny that
They positively grin.

Muddy shoes like tired tramps;
Dancing slippers new,—
Cobbler, as you mend them all,
Do they talk to you?

Do they tell you what they've seen
On the roads they know?
Do they say what sort of folk
Take them to and fro?

Are they glad to rest themselves
In your shop awhile?
Or are they eager to be off
Mile after mile?

And does the golden boot outside
Hanging by itself
Wish it were a plain, patched shoe,
Cobbler, on your shelf?

Poem and drawing are from a new book, "Taxis and Toadstools," by Rachel Field, which will be published by Doubleday, Page & Company in October, 1926.
Miss Field has three books coming out before Christmas, 1926.

THE CHARM OF THE OLD-FASHIONED STORY

About Some Books Written for Our Grandparents

By Helen Dean Fish

I WAS brought up rejoicing on the ten little red volumes of Jacob Abbott's Franconia Stories, and consequently rejoiced again when these delightful stories of the fifties were recently made available in modern dress for modern children. The other day I asked a children's librarian, noted for her wisdom, how the children had welcomed the revival of Jacob Abbott, and this is what she said:

"The children who come from families with a background of reading—whose parents perhaps read Jacob Abbott when *they* were young—love him, but the children without such background usually do not care for the old-fashioned story."

Here is food for thought.

Granting that the child with a literary heritage has the advantage—in a wider range of interest and power of appreciation—over the child whose parents care nothing for books, one is led a step further to wish that something could be done for the little unfortunate whose reading diet has been so exclusively up-to-the-minute books about cousins and uncles and little umpties that he is unwilling to try an "old-fashioned" book, or if he does, finds the doings of children of the nineteenth century dull and tasteless.

But what to do? You can't put a child on a reading diet. You can't *make* him like anything.

But you can entice him if you have the right books and fortunately, thanks to that friend of children, E. V. Lucas, there are two volumes representing the very best of old-time child literature, selected for modern children. The treasures of the period of child literature from 1790 to 1850 lie so few and far between that it is not in the least desirable that the modern child do his own delving. But Mr. Lucas has done it for him excellently well and produced in "Old-Fashioned Tales" and

"Forgotten Tales of Long Ago" a selection of stories so delightful that it is a hardened child indeed who will not yield, if properly introduced, to their humor and to the sheer interest of what children did—or were expected to do—a hundred years ago.

From "Forgotten Tales of Long Ago"

If the child likes to be read aloud to, the way to sure success in "putting over" the old-fashioned story is to read it aloud. Begin with "Old-Fashioned Tales," the volume of nineteen tales, written, as E. V. Lucas says in his valuable and altogether delightful introduction, "before the days when authors of books for children added to their ambition to please the nursery the wish to be thought clever outside of it, too." If the prospective reader is a girl, select Mrs. Mant's *The Little Blue Bag* to

begin on; if a boy, *The Basket Woman,* by Maria Edgeworth, or the ridiculous *Limby Lumpy.* The foolishness of the latter is irresistible and the resource of the ten-year-old boy hero of *The Basket Woman* will be a revelation to any small boy of today. No one can complain of lack of action here. Little Paul is not idle in good works or inventive genius for a moment and the narrative of how he devised an implement called a "scotcher," earned a pocketful of money, proved his honesty, presented his poor old grandmother with a warm blanket and provided himself and his sister with a respectable means of livelihood, all in the space of twenty-four hours or thereabouts, is a most gratifying exhibition of virtue reaping its reward. *The Basket Woman* is, in E. V. Lucas' opinion, "one of the best stories for children that has been written."

Other treasures to be found in "Old-Fashioned Tales" are *Embellishment* (taken from one of Jacob Abbott's Franconia stories and serving as a sample of the larger volume), *The Inquisitive Girl, The Changeling* by Mary Lamb, and *Bob and Dog Quiz,* the latest story included (1847), and almost in the modern spirit.

Mr. Lucas' second volume, "Forgotten Tales of Long Ago," contains twenty more stories of the same period, as attractive as those of the earlier selection and also illustrated by F. D. Bedford. My personal favorite in this volume is *Malleville's Night of Adventure,* made specially dear by associations of my own childhood. That was the story which, read aloud at my bedside, made my childish illnesses a desirable treat. But perhaps the general favorite would be *The Life and Adventures of Lady Anne.* This is quite a long story of a mislaid daughter of an earl, who earns her own living from the age of nine or ten, has harrowing adventures and is at last restored to her long lost father's arms. The thoroughness of the unwinding process by which the father follows his daughter's career backward, to reward those who have been kind to her and punish those who have not, is always a great satisfaction to me, as well as the delightful surprise of these people when they discover that the elegant little lady is the transformed waif of a few months before.

In this volume we find also Mrs. Edgeworth's familiar *Waste*

Not, Want Not, or Two Strings to Your Bow, Peter Parley's *Butcher's Tournament,* and *Amendment,* a delightful tale of a proud little boy who was brought low by the usual reverse of fortune till he was forced to share the frugal meals of a kind-hearted gardener's boy to keep from starving. At last it occurs to Master Charles that he himself might lift his hand to labor

From "Tales from Maria Edgeworth"

and it is with a positive thrill that the reader sees him come in from the field with two pence for his morning's work, to receive not the meagre share of his little friend's dinner but a full porringer and a dumpling of his own. "And why was Charles happy? I will tell you, my dear children. Because he was no longer a proud and froward boy as he had been, but was kind and sweet-tempered to every one and did his duty both to God

and himself." The moral, as Mr. Lucas says, is always part of the game, but it is all above board, and the point is that the writers of these tales made that game *interesting*. The stories attract through genuine narrative skill and selection of the detail that all children love, which is more than can be said of some of our modern children's books.

"He'd tie a string across the street,
Just to entangle people's feet.'
From "Original Poems"

Another volume which revives the good among the old-fashioned books is Austin Dobson's edition of "Tales from Maria Edgeworth." It includes a dozen stories from the little volumes by Mrs. Edgeworth, which appeared in 1796-1800, under the title of "The Parent's Assistant." These volumes were loved by the children of their day and it is well worth the modern child's while to make their acquaintance. Probably "Tales from Maria Edgeworth" will appeal to somewhat older children than the Lucas volumes already mentioned, or to chil-

dren who have acquired a taste for the "agreeable flavor of old-fashionedness." Here we find *Lazy Lawrence, Forgive and Forget, The False Key, The Basket Woman,* and the delightful *Orphans,* a tale in which Mary, aged twelve, with her younger sisters and her brother face the world alone, poor but honest, and make their own way, "for Edward, though he was not yet nine, was a stout-grown, healthy boy and well-disposed to work."

This volume is profusely illustrated by Hugh Thomson's inimitable pen-and-ink drawings.

A fourth volume which deserves mention in this group is "The Original Poems," by Ann and Jane Taylor, edited by E. V. Lucas and illustrated by F. D. Bedford. These poems were undertaken by the twenty-year-old Jane Taylor and her sister at the suggestion of a publisher who had seen one of Jane's narrative poems. They were first published in 1804. The sisters worked together and Ann, in her autobiography, gives this account of her sister's method of composition: "I have heard Jane say when sitting down to our new evening's business, 'I try to conjure up some child into my presence, address her suitably, as well as I am able, and when I begin to flag, I say to her, "There, love, you may go."'" This delightful method produced such poems as *Meddlesome Matty, James and the Shoulder of Mutton, A Little Bird's Complaint to His Mistress,* and the lovely and familiar

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky."

Mr. Lucas believes the secret of the longevity and acceptableness of these poems to be their simplicity and truth. "The authors chose their subjects from the daily life of normal children (with a few heightened incidents, such as man-traps, broken legs, and fires thrown in by way of spice), and not only described them in language such as children would use but imagined them very much as a child would have done."

Last but not least I must mention "The Fairchild Family," by Mrs. Sherwood (1818), which will perhaps be preferred by many children because it offers a continuous narrative about three children. The attractive modern edition is illustrated by Florence Rudland and has an introduction by Mary Palgrave.

The three Fairchilds are Lucy, Emily, and little Henry—full of mischief as well as original sin. Their father and mother are the infinitely wise, kind, and just parents of the early nineteenth century. The story begins with an account of a birthday walk, when the entire family goes to visit an old nurse—to give her pleasure—and enjoys a picnic on the grass of a meadow by a brookside. "Many sheep with their lambs were

From "The Fairchild Family"

feeding in this meadow, and here also were abundance of primroses, cowslips, daisies, and buttercups, and the songs of the birds which were in the hedgerows were exceedingly delightful." It is a charming and charitable day and gives little hint of the dark chapters to come when Henry steals *the* apple and lies about it; when Emily yields to the temptation of the damsons, and nine-year-old Lucy is guilty of the sin of envy till sad experience teaches her the error of her ways and she bursts out, "Oh, mamma, mamma, how unhappy wickedness makes us! I

have been very miserable this morning; and what for? Only because of the naughtiness of my heart, for I have nothing else to make me miserable!" Lucy was perfectly right in her diagnosis and her experience—an always interesting narrative—does our modern child no harm to contemplate. Moreover, there is in this story a picture of the properly conducted English home of that day that is full of charm and significance.

But after all, there is no better reason why children today should be given an opportunity and encouraged to read the old-fashioned story than because it is interesting. If it fails here, for the modern child, let it fail, and say no more. But I am convinced that it will not fail often if a fair trial be given. For if not the same in training, children are much the same in nature and in taste as in the days when little Henry Fairchild said:

"My book, I am certain, will be prettier than yours, Emily."

"Why must it be prettier?" asked his mother.

"Because Lucy said it is all about boys: I like boys' stories—there are so few books about boys."

"But I think it is a grave story," said Lucy.

"Never mind," answered Henry, *"if it be about boys."*

Books mentioned in this article:

Old-Fashioned Tales, by E. V. Lucas	$2.50
Forgotten Tales of Long Ago, by E. V. Lucas	2.50
Tales from Maria Edgeworth. Edited by Austin Dobson	2.50
The Original Poems, by Ann and Jane Taylor. Edited by E. V. Lucas	2.50
The Fairchild Family, by Mrs. Sherwood	2.50

THE BOOKSHOP WILL BUY USED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

ONE day last April two lads of ten and eleven years old came into The Bookshop, their faces full of wide-eyed interest. "We read in the *Boston American,*" said one, "about an exhibit of boys' work from Winnetka schools and we have come to see it." They looked at the exhibit material with a keen, critical eye, but it was soon plain that their greatest interest lay with the books. "That's a bully good story." "I've read almost everything Schultz has written but not that." They grew fairly excited as they passed along the shelves spotting their favorites and eyeing things they wanted to read. They explained meanwhile that they borrowed from two branches of the Public Library and in this way avoided waits, taking from one when they failed to get what they wanted at the other.

"How much is this book?" "And how much is this?" was asked over and over again, hopefully at first, but with discouragement at last. No book came within their means—a book at 25 cents was what was wanted.

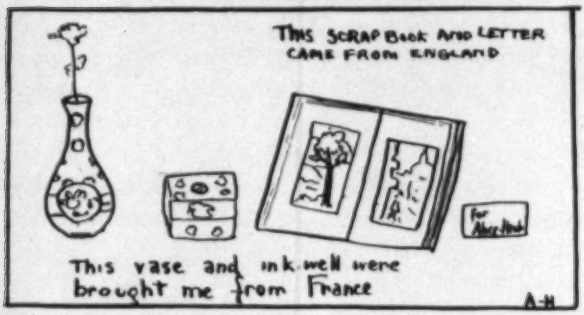
Now this was not an exceptional case by any means. Children are coming to visit constantly and searching for books which can be purchased on small allowances. Then there are the mothers who want good things but have little to spend. And there are the small town and village libraries with perhaps $65 for their yearly expenditure.

The way to meet this need for inexpensive books seems to be through the purchase of used books from homes where there are many books or where the children have finished with them.

If anyone has such books to sell, please write to the Director, enclosing a list. No books without bindings or soiled or badly worn are wanted.

The Editors of The Horn Book will report through these pages how the plan works out.

ALICE-HEIDI'S SECRETS



ONE day, just about Christmas time, I saw a new "Peter Rabbit" greeting card. It was Peter Rabbit himself, probably, and one of the Flopsy Bunnies under a big green umbrella returning from the post office. It was snowing hard but they were tucked quite cosily under their umbrella and were reading a letter which they had just received.

"O dear!" I thought, "what fun to be a bunny and to get a letter."

Not very long afterward I did get a letter and it was from England. Wasn't that a big surprise? It began:

"My dearest Alice-Heidi:—

I hope you will enjoy looking at these pictures (a beautifully made scrap-book came with the letter, but I'll tell about that later). There has been a thick fog in London, and we have not been going out," and then it ended up, "I should love to come over and see you in your little house some day." How I should love it, too, and I should set out my best tea-set and fringed napkins and plate of cakes. The scrap-book is a lovely one with little colored pictures, one on a page, and all of English houses, and gardens with big iron gates and masses of flowers. It is the nicest scrap-book I have ever seen, and if the little girl who made it wishes she could come and see me sometime, you can't think how I wish I could go to England and see her; and perhaps she could come with me to call on some

one I want to see more even than the Lord Mayor of London or Christopher Robin, and that is PETER RABBIT.

All the children who come into The Bookshop know just which shelf is the shelf where the Peter Rabbit books are kept, a long line of little grey green books, but not as long a line as they wish it were, for sometimes a child hunts and hunts to try and find one that has escaped him and will be all new.

Peter Rabbit lives on Mr. MacGregor's farm in the Lake Country and I am very sure that Tom Kitten and Jemima Puddleduck and the Flopsy Bunnies and all the other nice animals live near there, too. I think the picture in the front of "The Pie and the Patty Pan" must be Mr. MacGregor's farm with trees and fields all around it and a mountain behind it.

I can't write any more this time, but I'll make a picture, although I can't draw very well.

ALICE-HEIDI.

FALL EXHIBIT FOR 1926

INSTEAD of having another Summer Exhibit of Children's Drawings such as we had last summer in The Bookshop, we propose to show in October outdoor collections and nature note books made by boys and girls. In order to make such an exhibit possible to handle satisfactorily we shall have to make very definite entry rules.

I. Collections of flowers, ferns, grasses, etc., must be accurately labelled and made up in *book or portfolio form.*

II. Observations on animals, birds, gardens, etc., should be done in *note-book form* by means of written work and illustration.

III. Collections of butterflies, insects, shells, etc., should be arranged securely in boxes or trays.

Only the best of the entries shall be kept for exhibit and a first and second prize will be awarded.

Entry blanks should be applied for before August 1 and entries must be in by September 15. Individual boys and girls or a group working together as from a summer camp may compete.

In preparation for this exhibit in April we shall have for examination and sale a collection of the best materials helpful to the collector, not only nature reference books but also note books, nature charts, bird glasses, mounting-paper, in fact everything really necessary for careful collecting.

The Judges to select the exhibition will be competent ones and their names will be announced in the newspapers and summer Horn Book.

OUR FIELD

By Juliana Horatia Ewing

Reprinted from "A Great Emergency and Other Stories"

THERE were four of us, and three of us had godfathers and godmothers. Three each. Three times three makes nine, and not a fairy godmother in the lot. That was what vexed us.

It was very provoking, because we knew so well what we wanted if we had one, and she had given us three wishes each. Three times three make nine. We could have got all we wanted out of nine wishes, and have provided for Perronet into the bargain. It would not have been any good Perronet having wishes all to himself, because he was only a dog.

We never knew who it was that drowned Perronet, but it was Sandy who saved his life and brought him home. It was when he was coming home from school, and he brought Perronet with him. Perronet was not at all nice to look at when we first saw him, though we were very sorry for him. He was wet all over, and his eyes shut, and you could see his ribs, and he looked quite dark and sticky. But when he dried, he dried a lovely yellow, with two black ears like velvet. People sometimes asked us what kind of dog he was, but we never knew, except that he was the nicest possible kind.

When we had got him, we were afraid we were not going to be allowed to have him. Mother said we could not afford him, because of the tax and his keep. The tax was five shillings, but there wanted nearly a year to the time of paying it. Of course his keep began as soon as he could eat, and that was the very same evening. We were all very miserable, because we were so fond of Perronet—at least, Perronet was not his name then, but he was the same person—and at last it was settled that all three of us would give up sugar, towards saving the expense of his keep, if he might stay. It was hardest for Sandy, because he was particularly fond of sweet things; but then he was particularly fond of Perronet. So we all gave up sugar, and Perronet was allowed to remain.

About the tax, we thought we could save any pennies or half-pennies we got during the year, and it was such a long

time to the time for paying, that we should be almost sure to have enough by then. We had not any money at the time, or we should have bought a savings-box; but lots of people save their money in stockings, and we settled that we would. An old stocking would not do, because of the holes, and I had not many good pairs; but we took one of my winter ones to use in the summer, and then we thought we could pour the money into one of my good summer ones when the winter came.

* * * *

It was one day early in May—a very hot day for the time of year, which had made us rather cross—when Sandy came in about four o'clock, smiling more broadly even than usual, and said to Richard and me, "I've got a fairy godmother, and she's given us a field."

Sandy was very fond of eating, especially sweet things. He used to keep back things from meals to enjoy afterwards, and he almost always had a piece of cake in his pocket. He brought a piece out now, and took a large mouthful, laughing at us with his eyes over the top of it.

"What's the good of a field?" said Richard.

"Splendid houses in it," said Sandy.

"I'm quite tired of fancying homes," said I. "It's no good; we always get turned out."

"It's quite a new place," Sandy continued; "you've never been there," and he took a triumphant bite of the cake.

"How did you get there?" asked Richard.

"The fairy godmother showed me," was Sandy's reply.

There is such a thing as nursery honour. We respected each other's pretendings unless we were very cross, but I didn't disbelieve in his fairy godmother. I only said, "You shouldn't talk with your mouth full," to snub him for making a secret about his field.

Sandy is very good-tempered. He only laughed and said, "Come along. It's much cooler out now. The sun's going down."

He took us along Gipsy Lane. We had been there once or twice, for walks, but not very often, for there was some horrid story about it which rather frightened us. I do not know what it was, but it was a horrid one. Still we had been there, and I knew it quite well. At the end of it there is a

stile, by which you go into a field, and at the other end you get over another stile, and find yourself in the high road.

"If this is our field, Sandy," said I, when we got to the first stile, "I'm very sorry, but it really won't do. I know that lots of people come through it. We should never be quiet here."

Sandy laughed. He didn't speak, and he didn't get over the stile; he went through a gate close by it leading into a little sort of bye-lane that was all mud in winter and hard cart-ruts in summer. I had never been up it, but I had seen hay and that sort of thing go in and come out of it.

He went on and we followed him. The ruts were very disagreeable to walk on, but presently he led us through a hole in the hedge, and we got into a field. It was a very bare-looking field, and went rather uphill. There was no path, but Sandy walked away up it, and we went after him. There was another hedge at the top, and a stile in it. It had very rough posts, one much longer than the other, and the cross step was gone, but there were two rails, and we all climbed over. And when we got to the other side, Sandy leaned against the big post and gave a wave with his right hand and said, "This is our field."

It sloped downhill, and the hedges round it were rather high, with awkward branches of blackthorn sticking out here and there without any leaves, and with the blossoms lying white on the black twigs like snow. There were cowslips all over the field, but they were thicker at the lower end, which was damp. The great heat of the day was over. The sun shone still, but it shone low down and made such splendid shadows that we all walked about with grey giants at our feet; and it made the bright green of the grass, and the cowslips down below, and the top of the hedge, and Sandy's hair, and everything in the sun and the mist behind the elder bush which was out of the sun, so yellow—so very yellow—that just for a minute I really believed about Sandy's godmother, and thought it was a story come true, and that everything was turning into gold. . . .

"Sit down," said Sandy, doing the honours; and we all sat down under the hedge.

"There are violets just behind us," he continued. "Can't you smell them? But whatever you do, don't tell anybody of

those, or we shan't keep our field to ourselves for a day. And look here." He had turned over on to his face, and Richard and I did the same, whilst Sandy fumbled among the bleached grass and brown leaves.

"Hyacinths," said Richard, as Sandy displayed the green tops of them.

"As thick as peas," said Sandy. "This bank will be blue in a few weeks; and fiddle-heads everywhere. There will be no end of ferns. May to any extent—it's only in bud yet—and there's a wren's nest in there—" At this point he rolled suddenly over on to his back and looked up.

"A lark," he explained; "there was one singing its head off, this morning. I say, Dick, this will be a good field for a kite, won't it? *But wait a bit.*"

After every fresh thing, that Sandy showed us in our field, he always finished by saying, "*Wait a bit*"; and that was because there was always something else better still.

"There's a brook at the bottom there," he said, "with lots of fresh-water shrimps. I wonder whether they would boil red. *But wait a bit.* This hedge, you see, has got a very high bank, and it's worn into kind of ledges. I think we could play at 'shops' there—*but wait a bit.*"

"It's almost *too* good, Sandy dear!" said I, as we crossed the field to the opposite hedge.

"The best is to come," said Sandy. "I've a very good mind not to let it out till to-morrow." And to our distraction he sat down in the middle of the field, put his arms around his knees, as if we were playing at "Honey-pots," and rocked himself backwards and forwards with a face of brimming satisfaction.

Neither Richard nor I would have been so mean as to explore on our own account, when the field was Sandy's discovery, but we tried hard to persuade him to show us everything.

He had the most provoking way of laughing and holding his tongue, and he did that now, besides slowly turning all his pockets inside-out into his hands, and mumbling up the crumbs and odd currants, saying, "Guess!" between every mouthful.

But when there was not a crumb left in the seams of his pockets, Sandy turned them back, and jumping up, said, "One can only tell a secret once. It's a hollow oak. Come along!"

He ran and we ran, to the other side of Our Field. I had read of hollow oaks, and seen pictures of them, and once I dreamed of one, with a witch inside, but we had never had one to play in. We were nearly wild with delight. It looked all solid from the field, but when we pushed behind, on the hedge side, there was the door, and I crept in, and it smelt of wood, and delicious damp. There could not be a more perfect castle, and though there were no windows in the sides, the light came in from the top, where the polypody hung over like a fringe. Sandy was quite right. It was the very best thing in Our Field.

Perronet was as fond of the field as we were. What he liked were the little birds. At least, I don't know that he liked them, but they were what he chiefly attended to. I think he knew that it was our field, and thought he was the watch-dog of it, and whenever a bird settled down anywhere, he barked at it, and then it flew away, and he ran barking after it till he lost it; and by that time another had settled down, and then Perronet flew at him, and so on, all up and down the hedge. He never caught a bird, and never would let one sit down, if he could see it.

We had all kinds of games in Our Field. Shops—for there were quantities of things to sell—and sometimes I was a moss-merchant, for there were ten different kinds of moss by the brook, and sometimes I was a jeweller, and sold daisy-chains and pebbles, and coral sets made of holly berries, and oak-apple necklaces; and sometimes I kept provisions, like earth nuts, and mallow-cheese, and mushrooms; and sometimes I kept a flower-shop, and sold nosegays and wreaths, and umbrellas made of rushes. I liked that kind of shop, because I am fond of arranging flowers, and I always make our birthday wreaths. And sometimes I kept a whole lot of shops, and Richard and Sandy bought my things, and paid for them with money made of elder-pith, sliced into rounds. The first shop I kept was to sell cowslips, and Richard and Sandy lived by the brook, and were wine merchants, and made cowslip wine in a tin mug.

The elder tree was a beauty. In July the cream-coloured flowers were so sweet, we could hardly sit under it, and in the autumn it was covered with berries; but we were always a little disappointed that they never tasted in the least like elderberry syrup. Richard used to make flutes out of the stalks, and one really did to play tunes on, but it always made Perronet bark.

Richard's everyday cap had a large hole in the top, and when we were in Our Field we always hung it on the top of the tallest of the two stile posts, to show that we were there; just as the Queen has a flag hung out at Windsor Castle when she is at home. . . .

We were very happy that summer; the boys were quite happy, and the only thing that vexed me was thinking of Perronet's tax money. For months and months went on and we did not save it. Once we got as far as twopence halfpenny, and then one day Richard came to me and said, "I must have some more string for the kite. You might lend me a penny out of Perronet's stocking, till I get some money of my own."

So I did; and the next day Sandy came and said, "You lent Dick one of Perronet's coppers; I'm sure Perronet would lend me one," and then they said it was ridiculous to leave a halfpenny there by itself, so we spent it in acid drops.

It worried me so much at last that I began to dream hor-

rible dreams about Perronet having to go away because we hadn't saved his tax money. And then I used to wake up and cry, till the pillow was so wet, I had to turn it. The boys never seemed to mind, but then boys don't think about things; so that I was quite surprised when one day I found Sandy alone in our field with Perronet in his arms, crying, and feeding him with cake; and I found he was crying about the tax money.

I cannot bear to see boys cry. I would much rather cry myself, and I begged Sandy to leave off, for I said I was quite determined to try and think of something.

It certainly was remarkable that the very next day should be the day when we heard about the flower show.

It was in school—the village school, for mother could not afford to send us anywhere else—and the schoolmaster rapped on his desk and said, "Silence, children!" and that at the agricultural show there was to be a flower show this year, and that an old gentleman was going to give prizes to the school children for window plants and for the best arranged wild flowers. There were to be nosegays and wreaths, and there was to be a first prize of five shillings, and a second prize of half-a-crown, for the best collection of wild flowers with the names put to them.

"The English names," said the schoolmaster; "and there may be—silence, children! there may be collections of ferns, or grasses, or mosses to compete, too, for the gentleman wishes to encourage a taste for natural history."

And several of the village children said, "What's that?" and I squeezed Sandy's arm, who was sitting next to me, and whispered, "Five shillings!" and the schoolmaster said, "Silence, children!" and I thought I never should have finished my lessons that day for thinking of Perronet's tax money.

July is not at all a good month for wild flowers; May and June are far better. However, the show was to be in the first week in July.

I said to the boys, "Look here: I'll do a collection of flowers. I know the names, and I can print. It's no good two or three people muddling with arranging flowers; but if you will get me what I want, I shall be very much obliged. If either of you will make another collection, you know there are ten kinds of

mosses by the brook; and we have names for them of our own, and they are English. Perhaps they'll do. But everything must come out of Our Field."

The boys agreed, and they were very good. Richard made me a box, rather high at the back. We put sand at the bottom and damped it, and then Feather Moss, lovely clumps of it, and into that I stuck the flowers. They all came out of Our Field. I like to see grass with flowers, and we had very pretty grasses, and between every bunch of flowers I put a bunch of grass of different kinds. I got all the flowers and all the grasses ready first, and printed the names on pieces of cardboard to stick in with them, and then I arranged them by my eye, and Sandy handed me what I called for, for Richard was busy at the brook making a tray of mosses.

Sandy knew the flowers and the names of them quite as well as I did, of course; we knew everything that lived in Our Field; so when I called, "Ox-eye daisies, cock's-foot grass, labels; dog-roses, shivering grass, labels;" and so on, he gave me the right things, and I had nothing to do but to put the colours that looked best together next to each other, and to make the grass look light, and pull up bits of the moss to show well. And at the very end I put in a label, "All out of Our Field."

I did not like it when it was done; but Richard praised it so much, it cheered me up, and I thought his mosses looked lovely.

The flower-show day was very hot. I did not think it could be hotter anywhere in the world than it was in the field where the show was; but it was hotter in the tent.

We should never have got in at all—for you had to pay at the gate—but they let competitors in free, though not at first. When we got in, there were a lot of grown-up people, and it was very hard work getting along among them, and getting to see the stands with the things on. We kept seeing tickets with "1st Prize" and "2nd Prize," and struggling up; but they were sure to be dahlias in a tray, or fruit that you mightn't eat, or vegetables. The vegetables disappointed us so often, I got to hate them. I don't think I shall ever like very big potatoes (before they are boiled) again, particularly the red ones. It makes me feel sick with heat and anxiety to think of them.

We had struggled slowly all round the tent, and seen all the cucumbers, onions, lettuces, long potatoes, round potatoes, and everything else, when we saw an old gentleman, with spectacles and white hair, standing with two or three ladies. And then we saw three nosegays in jugs, with all the green picked off, and the flowers tied as tightly together as they would go, and then we saw some prettier ones, and then we saw my collection, and it had got a big label in it marked "1st Prize," and next to it came Richard's moss-tray, with the Hair-moss, and the Pincushion-moss, and the Scale-mosses, and a lot of others with names of our own, and it was marked "2nd Prize." And I gripped one of Sandy's arms just as Richard seized the other, and we both cried, "Perronet is paid for!"